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lation it appears, "that the magnetic force, like universal gravitation does not experience any sensible variations at the greatest heights to which we can arrive." Now as M. Lussac told us at page vi. that his compass was spoiled, and makes an apology in page ix. for drawing this conclusion, we confess ourselves a little at a loss how to understand him.

At page x. he says, "that at the height of 2314 toises, about 14,000 feet, and 3133, about 18,900 feet, I presented to a small needle, and in the direction of the magnetic force, the inferior extremity of a key; the needle was attracted and then repulsed by the other extremity of the key, a new and very evident proof of the action of terrestrial magnetism." This we can by no means think a correct conclusion, we have little doubt but that if a magnet was carried even beyond the power of the earth's attraction, it would attract iron with an equal power as if placed in immediate contact with the earth, for the magnetic power once communicated to a piece of steel remains for a considerable time, change the position as much as you please; or after fixing the northern end to point south, for many months, it seems equally sensible as if it had remained in the due direction, for the same space of time, though no doubt it is gradually changing its poles.

M. Lussac's last experiment is that which caught our attention most, "At the height of 2353 toises, about 14,250 feet, I opened one of my glass balloons, and at the height of 3405 toises, about 20,560 feet, I opened the second, the air entered each with a hissing noise." "On my arrival at Paris, my first care was employed in the analysis of the air which I brought. All the experiments were made at the the Polytechnic School," They prove then that the atmospheric air, and air taken at an elevation of 3405 toises, about 20,560 feet, are identically the same." These experiments tend greatly to confirm those made by Sir John Ingenhouse, and others in England, the air taken by them was but at a small elevation, compared with M. Lussac's, yet as the analysis of each came to the same conclusion, it is very satisfactory. It shows the complete and speedy diffusion and intermixture of the component parts of our atmosphere, and the wise ordinance of nature to destroy the most noxious vapours, by an almost instantaneous junction of salubrious.

Although we could scarcely have expected to meet with M. Gay Lussac's memoir in its present situation, we must acknowledge, that upon the whole, we have been considerably gratified with its perusal.

Marmion; a Tale of Flodden Field, by Walter Scott, esq. 8vo. p.p. 377; second edition; Edinburgh, Constable; London, Miller, &c 1808, *price* 12*s. boards.*

(Continued from page 60. *No. I.)*

THE second canto presents a new and more interesting scene. Clara de Clare accompanies the abbess of St. Whitby, (with whom she resided) to Lindisfarne, where a chapter was to be held for the trial of Constance and her accomplice. We regret that our limits prevent us from giving, in the words of the poet, his description of the journey of these ladies, and the circumstances which preceded the assembly of this terrible court of judicature. But we should think ourselves inexcusable, did we pass over the trial and condemnation, which are recorded in strains of the most pathetic solemnity. The gloomy vault in which the court is held, the appearance of the judges, the sentence, the execution, all are pourtrayed with the pencil of a master. The determined, lofty despair of Constance, is finely contrasted with the despicable timidity of her fellow sufferer; and raises in the mind a sympathy for her sufferings, which her former conduct was ill adapted to excite. Through the whole of this scene she appears, like Milton's fallen archangel, majestic, though in ruins.

The discovery of her sex is thus described:

Her sex, a page's dress belied,
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscur'd her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But at the prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band,

That tied her tresses fair,
And rais'd the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
When thus her face was given to view,
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear,
To those bright ringlets glistering fair;)
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy, &c.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no controul,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed:
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shaun'd not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound, beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom, without a tear.

The punishment which attended a crime of this nature, was truly dreadful. The miserable victim of monastic severity, was to be immured alive in a niche of one of the abbey vaults. With the execution of this barbarous sentence the canto terminates:

An hundred winding steps convey,
That conclave to the upper day;
But ere they breath'd the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take,
(Such speed as age and fear can make)
And cross'd themselves, *for terror's sake*,
As hurrying, tottering on.
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll,
For welfare of a parting soul.

In the following canto, we return to Marmion, whom we find in an inn on the road. Here as they are collected round the fire, the strange appearance of the palmer strikes them all with awe:

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half;
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell,
But not for that, tho' more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The palmer's visage fell.

To divert the attention of his train from this extraordinary personage, Marmion calls on his squire for a song, who obeys, by singing a favourite air of Constance. The recollections excited by this, revive in the mind of his master, the ungrateful requital he had bestowed on her love. His remorse is feelingly expressed:

His conscience slept, he deem'd her well,
And safe secur'd in convent cell;
But waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that fam'd palmer's *boding say*,
That fell so ominous and drear
Full on the object of his fear;
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd
All lovely on his soul return'd:
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

In return for the squire's song, the inn-keeper tells a tale, of a supernatural being, which haunts the neighbourhood. Marmion, affected by the story, and disturbed by his own thoughts, goes forth in quest of the apparition. On arriving at the place described, he is encountered and overthrown by an unknown being. This imagined phantom, as, afterwards appears, is no other than Wilton, who suspecting his antagonist's intention takes this opportunity of revenge; but in consequence of a vow spares his life. His defeated rival retires dispirited to the inn, and prepares to pursue his journey, still accompanied by Wilton, who resumes his palmer's dress, and remains still unknown.

Here we cannot avoid regretting, that, on this and other occasions when recourse is had to supernatural agency the maxim of Horace is totally neglected.

Both in this and in other places, no use is made of them for the furtherance or developement of the plot, but they seem to be introduced, like the figures of a magic lantern, for no other reason, than to excite the fears of the reader.

Marmion pursues his journey in the fourth canto, is met by a Scotch herald, appointed to conduct him, and after some delay, arrives at the camp; the appearance of which is displayed with great spirit.

Thousand pavillions white as snow,
Spread all the borough moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down;
A thousand, did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum;
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horse's tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh:
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

Then follows a description of the surrounding country. The effect produced by it on the English spectators is finely imagined:

Fitzeustace' heart felt closely pent,
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And rais'd his bridle hand,
And, making demi volte in air,
Cries, "where's the coward would not dare
To fight for such a land?"

In the fifth canto the plot begins to thicken. Marmion is led through the enemy's camp; and Mr. S. takes this opportunity of enumerating and describing the various kinds of forces of which it was composed. This part is by no means tedious, but none of it less so than his account of the Highland clans:

Next Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the chiefs their tribes array'd
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd
To every varying clan;
Wild thro' their red or sable hair,
Look'd out their eyes, with savage stare,
On Marmion as he pass'd;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare
And harden'd to the blast:
Of taller race, the chiefs they own,
Were by the eagles plumage known,
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head;
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broad sword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore;
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but O!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Iles-men carried at their backs,
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They rais'd a wild and wond'ring cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.

Hence he is introduced to the Scottish court, the manners of which are finely sketched as are the characters of king James, and his favourite lady Heron:

The monarch's form was middle size,
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shap'd in proportion fair,
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye:
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists,
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And lov'd to plead, lament, and sue;
Suit lightly won, and short-liv'd pain!
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.

The description of lady Heron is still more highly coloured. The embassy however fails; and the ambassador is committed to the care of the Earl of Angus, until the return of a herald, who had been dispatched to the English court with a letter of defiance. It happens that about the same time Clara and the abbess were captured on their return, by a Scotch vessel, and brought into Edinburgh. The abbess, who had heard from Constance, previous to her death, the story of Marmion's perfidy and Wilton's innocence, is uneasy at the protector who has been chosen. Under these circumstances she consults with the disguised palmer, who thus obtains convincing proofs of his own innocence. The conference between these persons is broken off by an unmeaning pageantry of visionary beings, who appear in the air, and solemnly summon the Scotch king, and those noblemen who were to fall in the ensuing battle. The vision proceeds to name Marmion and Wilton, but that citation of the latter is retracted. The old earl is made acquainted with the treachery and guilt of his English guest. The consequence is, that he restores Wilton to the honours of knighthood, and treats his rival with such marked coldness, that he determines to quit the castle, and proceed immediately with Clara to England.

In the beginning of the last canto, Wilton, having been restored to the rights of knighthood, by the earl of Angus, discovers himself to Clara, and departs from the castle. Marmion also prepares to continue his route, and at his departure, remains behind to take leave of his entertainer. The old earl, indignant at the knowledge of his character, refuses to give him his hand, and alledge his reasons, which are worthy the high-born spirit of an ancient chieftain.

My manors, halls, and bow'rs shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation stone,
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.

High words arise, in the course of which the earl is so much irritated that he gives orders for the immediate detention of his guest; and Marmion with difficulty escapes:

Lord Marmion turned, *well was his need,*
And dash'd his rowels in his steed:
Like arrow thro' the gateway *sprung,*
The pond'rous grate behind him *rung,*
To pass, there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume,
The steed along the drawbridge *flies,*
Just as it *trembled* on the rise.
Not lighter does the swallow skim,
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

On his journey he is informed of Wilton's story, but the sight of the two opposing armies banished every other thought, and he hastens to join the English squadrons, and share in the glories of the day.

It is in the description of the battle, that the genius of Mr. Scott displays itself in the greatest splendour. He seems as if he had curbed his imagination in the former parts, in order that it might here burst forth with a greater impetuosity. Here every thing is new, every thing great, every thing noble. It is no longer an unsteady light breaking out at intervals; but flash after flash, succeed one another with such rapidity, as to leave the mind no time to recover itself, or reflect how, or whence it is affected. In this part he resembles one of his native mountain torrents, at one time thundering over rocks, and dashing among precipices, at another, spreading over the plains, sweeping along with it all it meets; still increasing in violence, yet every where sublime; and as it changes its appearance from terrific tumult to majestic calmness, only assuming various forms of sublimity.

The era of the action is admirably adapted to a description of this nature. Whatever is great in ancient or modern warfare, whatever is romantic in the age of chivalry, can here be introduced and aid in producing one grand effect. In former times the tumult of the battle did not commence till the armies closed; in modern days, all the circumstances of horror occur when they are distant; the moment of the shock and the beginning of the rout are the same. In the middle ages, the modern discoveries aided, but did abolish the antient system. Mr. S. seems to have perceived this, and taken the greatest advantage of it. To the horrors of the close combat, so often described by the old poets, the glitter of armour, the clash of spears and shields, the shock of the close formed phalanx, is added the rattle of drums, peals of musquetry, the thunders and blaze of artillery; and with these are blended the gaudy trappings, the pennons, the standards of the knights, forming a picture, which none but a master's thought or pen could fancy or describe. Mr. Scott has availed himself of all this; he has also seized upon every real incident, and invented every imaginary circumstance which could add to its sublimity.

We are placed as spectators on an eminence at a little distance from the plain, where two of Marmion's squires are left the unwilling protectors of Clara: hence we see the English army winding through the defiles and regularly deploying in the plain; on the other side we behold the Scotch standing inactive on the eminences, and reflect with astonishment on the infatuation which prevents them from attacking the enemy while entangled among the mountains. We view them start suddenly from their inactivity, set fire to their tents, and under cover of the smoke, pour down upon the

English; we hear, but cannot see the shock; its terrors are increased by the cloudy veil in which it is involved. The wind freshens; the smoke rolls away; the armies gradually appear; the chiefs, distinguished by their ensigns, now rush forward, now retire; one moment sink, the next, recover; each is seen; each is distinguished. We look for the hero; we perceive him in the thickest of the fight; he disappears; the battle thickens round him. A wounded knight is borne slowly from the field: it is Marmion: he is carried to the hill, and in his last moments is indebted to the charitable assistance of the injured Clara. Suddenly, the noise of the fray which had subsided for a moment, revives; and Marmion, forgetting his wounds, exhausts his dying breath in an exclamation worthy of a soldier.

The war, that for a space *did* fail
Now trebly thundering, swell'd the gale,
  And, "Stanley," was the cry:
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
  And fir'd his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He wav'd the fragment of his blade,
  And shouted—"victory.
Charge, Chester, charge—on, Stanley on,"
Were the last words of Marmion.

Night separates the combatants, and discovers to the Scotch, who still faintly maintain the field, the discomfiture of their host, and the loss of their king. The poem concludes, as may be expected, by the marriage of Wilton and Clara.

To quote all the beautiful passages would be to copy nearly the whole canto. To omit any would be injustice to all. We cannot however pass over the following, not solely on account of its intrinsic merit, but because among many reflections interspersed through the work, which contribute very much to clog and impede the narrative, this is the only one which is free from this fault.

O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade,
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When with the baron's casque the maid,
  To the nigh streamlet ran;
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
  Sees but the dying man.

Such is the faint outline of this poem. In the narrow limits to which we are confined, it is impossible to do it complete justice. We can neither dwell on its beauties, nor point out its defects: nor is it necessary to enlarge on either; both are of that striking kind which must arrest our notice. The beauties are often of the brightest, the sublimest nature: the faults are chiefly those of haste, or over-confidence. The want of arrangement and perspicuity in the plot, the careless style of composition, the prosaic measures, the vulgar expressions, the false rhimes, the grammatical errors which too often occur, might easily have been avoided. Had he followed the example of the great master of Latin poetry; had his cooler judgment corrected the fervour of his imagination, we should have looked forward to the time, when posterity would place his name among the number of those, whose writings are handed down from age to age, through admiring generations, a record of themselves and their country, when themselves and their country have ceased to exist.

ANCIENT LITERATURE.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

WITH pleasure observing that your prospectus has proposed admission to classical dissertations, I submit to the inspection of you and your revising committee, the following essay, impartially wishing it whatever fate it merits. I cannot express the pleasure I derive from making the smallest contribution to so high a depart-